

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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Saturday, March 17, 2007

'Leave Me in Peace'

Rufa Mae Quinto is pissed that her ex-boyfriend, cager Rudy Hatfield, keeps dragging her name into his interviews. "I hope he and his fiancée will leave me in peace."

Page 5



Busy Heart

"I was a Jessica Simpson in the making," says Heart Evangelista of the different projects lined up for her by ABS-CBN: "It's a Christmas-birthday-Valentine gift rolled into one."

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Cohen to meet with Filipinos

RP Consulate seeks contribution of questions from Filipino community

By MARCONI CALINDAS
REPORTER

David Cohen, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary for insular affairs, will meet with the Filipino community on March 25 to gather questions and concerns about the impending federalization issue in the CNMI.

In an interview yesterday, Philippine Consul General Wilfredo DL Maximo disclosed that OIA field representative Jeff Schorr visited his office Thursday to inform him of the intention of OIA to gather feedback from the Filipino community in the Commonwealth.

Maximo said the meeting with Cohen would be held on March 25, 2pm at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. "He is meeting with the Filipino community to get ideas of what the [Filipino community] think of the federalization issue," Maximo said.

He said Cohen would be joined by OIA staff members to answer questions from the group.

The meeting with Cohen may also inform the Filipino community of what "may or may not happen" in the CNMI. Maximo said the discussion with Cohen would also clarify the various rumors relating to federalization.

The Filipino community is considered the largest ethnic group in the Commonwealth. Schorr reportedly told Maximo that, right after meeting with Filipinos, OIA would meet with other groups that have been re-

COHEN Page 2

Cohen

Cohen

Cohen

Cohen

Cohen



Cohen



MIKE ANCHETA
NISPEROS JR.

Fil-Am lawyer joins AGO

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Attorney General's Office has hired a Filipino-American attorney to go after white-collar crime in the Commonwealth.

Mike Ancheta Nisperos Jr. quit his own practice in Oakland, California to join the CNMI's pool of government attorneys in January 2007.

FIL-AM Page 2



Ren-Ren Santos, third from right, receives his awards after being declared the overall champion in the Hair Asia Vidal Sassoon Academy hair and make-up competition in the Philippines. His model is Jordana Scheffler, third from left. Others in picture are members of the panel of judges, including makeup artists Patrick Rosas, left, and James Cooper, right.

Santos adds another feather to his cap

By MARCONI CALINDAS
REPORTER

Saipan-based hair and make-up artist Ren-Ren Santos was declared the overall champion in the recently concluded Hair Asia Vidal Sassoon Academy hair and make-up competition in the Philippines, where he bested at least 1,000 hairstyle and make-up artists to win first places in both the Bridal and Commercial categories.

The contest was held March 5 at the World Trade Center along Roxas Boulevard in Metro Manila. Santos won a trip to China where he would join the world's best hairstylists and make-up artists for training at the Vidal Sassoon Academy.

This latest success is just another notch in the belt of 32-year-old Ren-Ren, who is

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PINOYNEWS

OFW remittances hit \$1.1B in Jan.

By **ERIK DE LA CRUZ**
XINHUA FINANCIAL NEWS SERVICE

MANILA, Philippines—Money sent home in January by over eight million Filipinos abroad reached \$1.10 billion, up 20 percent from a year earlier, the central bank said.

The central bank based the January data on remittances coursed through banks. The fig-

ure does not yet include remittances that go through informal channels.

“The strong remittance flows at the start of 2007 can be traced to the more aggressive marketing efforts of banks and money transfer operators to provide overseas workers improved access to financial services, through the establishment of additional

remittance centers and tie-ups abroad,” central bank governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

“With the enhanced services offered by banks and money transfer operators to remitters, it is expected that more than 90 percent of overseas workers’ cash remittances will be coursed through the banks in 2007,” Tetangco said.

FIL-AM

FROM PAGE 1

He has set several goals for the minimum two years that he will stay here. These goals include: to serve the Commonwealth using his nearly three decades of legal experience, to visit surrounding Asian countries, and to get invited to a party where goat meat will be served.

“I was very flattered that [Attorney General Matthew Gregory] selected me, and brought me here specifically for the purpose of prosecuting corruption and white collar crime. I’ve done that in my career and I’m looking forward to doing it here and serving the people of the CNMI too,” Nisperos says.

Born in Mississippi, Nisperos is a second generation American on the side of his Filipino father and 17th generation American on the side of his Scot-Irish mother. He has lived in California since the age of 5.

He served in Vietnam as a member of the U.S. Marine

Corps, completing his second tour of duty in November 1971. A month after his return, he met the woman who was to be his wife, Eleanor Oducaen.

At the time, Eleanor had just graduated from the University of California Berkeley’s Boalt School of Law, the first Filipino woman to do so in the school’s history. Eleanor is also believed to be the first Filipino woman to become a lawyer in the United States.

The gap between the pair goes beyond the issue of academic background. They also were on opposite sides of the Vietnam War debate. “She was there [Bay Area] with all the protests in UC Berkeley, teargas, and the cops fighting the protesters. So she was protesting the war, I was fighting in it,” Nisperos recalls.

But they overcame their differences. After several months of courtship, they got married in 1983.

At Eleanor’s encouragement, Nisperos used his GI bill to enroll at UC Berkeley in 1974. He completed a bachelor’s degree

in rhetoric and went on to finish a law degree in 1978.

“I didn’t decide [to go to law school], she did,” Nisperos says.

Eleanor relates how it happened, “I thought Mike was really a brilliant guy with a lot of verbal skills. I don’t think I have a lot of verbal skills. I’m kind of shy. I thought he’d be great. He’s everything I was not. I said, ‘With your skills, you’re going to be a great trial attorney.’ And I could never be a trial attorney. I was not a litigator. I thought he would find it exciting, and I think he has.”

Judging by her husband’s career, Eleanor must have been right.

After passing the bar, Nisperos worked as a deputy district attorney in the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office for two years. He set up his own law office in 1980, and returned to government service in 1982. He spent the next four years with the U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General’s Office in Guam and Riverside, California, divided between the duties

In 2001, only about 72 percent of cash remittances passed through the banks, he said.

He noted that the level of remittances in January remained substantial despite the drop in the deployment of workers that month.

Citing government figures, Tetangco said 96,359 workers were deployed in January, down 7.1 percent year-on-year.

of chief of military justice and area defense counsel.

Then, he worked as an associate for two law firms, before he volunteered for recall to active duty in November 1990. He was given a one-month assignment to the Castle AFB Legal Office in California.

In February 1991, Nisperos was appointed to lead the Oakland Mayor’s Office of Drugs and Crime, a position he held for six years. He served as public safety liaison for the City Manager’s Office in Oakland for four years beginning 1997.

From April 2001, he served as chief trial counsel for the State Bar of California, supervising a

SANTOS

FROM PAGE 1

no stranger to receiving prestigious awards from the cosmetology industry. At the Genoveva Hair Power in Garapan where he works, Ren-Ren’s trophies adorn several shelves, each of them won from various hair and makeup competitions.

It was not all easy, though, said Ren-Ren, recalling the hardships he went through to get to where he is now. He said he wouldn’t have reaped all these accolades and honors if he hadn’t been tempered by all the challenges that he had faced in his past.

For Ren-Ren, the road toward success began in his hometown of Cainta, Rizal, a sleepy suburb of the greater Metro Manila area. At 18, Ren-Ren said, he had to work as a salon assistant. He remembered how he used to sweep all the customers’ hair inside the salon and how he would observe the beauticians and their work. He said he tried to learn from them just by looking at them work on clients. He knew that he would need those exposures for his career.

He said he is grateful to friend Ogot Santos who, in 1989, helped and inspired him to join the regional Hairstyle and Make-Up Competition, where he won the plum. He was then sent to compete in the national finals, where he won the championship in the Commercial Category.

“I was so happy with that victory because it was Ricky Reyes who organized the

COHEN

FROM PAGE 1

siding and working on the islands for a long time now.

Maximo said Schorr informed him that Cohen would meet with these groups in time for his participation in the upcoming Micronesian Summit on March 20 to 22.

Maximo is calling on all Filipinos to take part in this meeting by submitting their questions to the Philippine Consulate General so that they could collate

staff of 235 prosecutors, investigators and support personnel. During his four-year term, he supervised the largest investigation in the history of the State Bar of California. The case involved a small group of young attorneys exploiting the provisions of the state’s unfair competition laws to extort settlements from a victim class of about 5,000 small businesses. The case resulted in the resignation of the attorneys.

Nisperos retired from government service in March 2005 and had his own law office when he got hired to work in Saipan.

Nisperos says the CNMI’s proximity to Asia and the large Filipino community here are two

event,” he added. Reyes is a noted hair and makeup artist in the Philippines.

Ren-Ren proved to the organizers that he truly deserved the recognition when he bagged the championship in the International finals where he bested hundreds of hairstylists and make-up artists from throughout Asia.

Through his friend, fashion icon and established designer Gener Gozum, Ren-Ren met his current employer and friend, Julie Cunanan, who invited him to work for Genoveva’s Hair Power in 2001. He said he didn’t hesitate to try his luck abroad and away from his family and friends. He said, “I wanted to know if I could make it abroad.”

At first, he never felt so discouraged in his life, regretting his decision to move to the CNMI. He thought he couldn’t make it here and be successful enough to help his family back home.

“I was wrong. I never thought that I’ll succeed here on Saipan,” Ren-Ren said. He now considers Saipan his second home.

Through his hard work, he was able to buy his parents a new home. He said it was his biggest dream to buy his mom and dad a new house since they used to rent a house.

Just this year, Ren-Ren held a house warming and blessing for his new home, also located in his hometown in Rizal. He said this two-room, two-storey apartment also came from his years of dedicated work. “Who would’ve thought that I could buy a house and lot for my family and me,” he said, beaming.

and edit them for proper address during the meeting.

He said Filipinos could write their questions on pieces of paper either in English or Filipino.

He added that questions in Filipino could be translated to English through his office’s assistance.

He wants the questions collected now, he said, so that the meeting with Cohen would be more systematic and “fruitful” and that all concerns of the Filipino community members in the CNMI would be addressed accordingly.

of the reasons he and his wife decided to relocate to Saipan.

“We’re both very active in the Filipino community since before we got married. We’ve been married 34 years this June. So in the Bay Area, we knew everybody because we were activists in Filipino-American politics. We want to be active in the Filipino community here.

“But we’re being patient—we’re still trying to get a car for each of us, get unpacked. We’re telling ourselves, be patient. We will find friends and make friends. Because they don’t serve kambing in the restaurants, we have to go a private party,” he said.

His dreams now include helping his nephews and nieces back home. “They are now part of my goals—to help them finish their studies,” he said.

Ren-Ren’s passion to improve his skills doesn’t stop after winning this month’s Hair Asia Vidal Sassoon Academy Hairstyle and Make-Up Competition. He said that he still strives and continues to hone his craft in order to provide better services to his loyal clients.

He said he is hoping that his achievement would inspire aspiring hairstylists and make-up artists not only in the CNMI but also back home. He said they should work harder in this industry.

“There may be challenges along the road but just ignore them, like what I did. These trials have challenged me more,” Ren-Ren said.

Ren-Ren will soon fly to China where he would meet and train with other hairstylists and make-up artists in the world. This training is part of his winnings from the recent competition.

Ren-Ren recalled that during the announcements of the winners, Hair Asia organizer Evelyn Alvaran-Cruz remarked that after so many years, history was repeated when he bagged three major awards in one competition—a rare feat achieved by only one other person, renowned make-up artist Patrick Rosas.

Ren-Ren said he is thankful for the support of his family, friends, staff, and assistants back home. He also thanked long-time friend Ernie Molina for the belief and trust in his talent and skill. “Thank you, Ernie,” he said.

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'Take part in May 14 elections'

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Are you ready to vote and take part in the May 14, 2007 national and local elections in the Philippines? It is not too late for registered

voters, said Ed Reyes, chairman of the United Filipino Organization on Saipan.

"We encourage our fellow Filipinos to go out and exercise our right to vote in this year's elections. If we don't know the can-

didates yet, we better check the news now, watch TV, [and] read the newspapers," said Reyes.

He said UFO would be willing to assist in disseminating information about the election but there are no updates yet from the Philippine government.

"In the past presidential election, we were involved in the distribution of pamphlets and brochures about the conduct of elections," he said.

He said one of the Saipan-based Filipino organizations, Bayani, had at one time served as election watchdog, representing Namfrel on Saipan.

"Right now, there's no accreditation of that sort. I don't think Namfrel is doing it this year," said Reyes.

Reyes said the Philippine government has asked former special

board election inspectors who served in the 2004 presidential election on Saipan if they can do the same this year.

"We're given a letter asking if we still want to help," said Reyes.

He said there were 39 election inspectors on Saipan in 2004. They spent two days counting the votes cast in the CNMI.

This year's election will be held on May 14 in the Philippines. It is not known yet if overseas voters could vote ahead of the date.

"We have no notice yet so far," said Reyes.

He said overseas voting is usually limited to national and party-list candidates.

This year's two biggest political parties in the Philippines are Team Unity of the Arroyo administration and the Genuine Opposition.

Guam honors RP travel agents in Mla. reception

TUMON, Guam—A delegation from Guam, including Guam Visitors Bureau marketing manager Pilar Lagunaña, marketing officer Gina Kono, and the Hafa Adai Show performers led by local entertainers Jesse and Ruby, along with a group of cultural dancers, arrived in the Philippines last week to host a Travel Agent Appreciation Reception. The reception was held Tuesday, March 6, at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Manila and included congratulatory speeches and a special performance by the Hafa Adai Show.

The reception was held to thank the many travel agents who have supported Guam by promoting the island as a premium destination to travelers from the Philippines. While many travelers go to Guam to visit with family, the efforts of these travel agents is very apparent in the 19 percent increase in arrivals to Guam from the Philippines since 2005. GVB honored travel agents for their exemplary work in promoting Guam and encouraged the agents to continue with their outstanding efforts.

Guam has always enjoyed a special relationship with the Philippines. In addition to geographical proximity, Filipinos make up

26.3 percent of Guam's total population, the second largest ethnic group on the island following Guam's native Chamorros.

Guam and the Philippines share a strong Spanish influence in their respective cultures and over the years, Guam has adopted many of the traditions and values of its Filipino neighbors.

In addition to showing its appreciation to the travel agents, the GVB also took advantage of the opportunity to share the island's plans for the coming year, which include the opening of new hotels, facilities, and attractions to further entice visitors from the Philippines.

One eagerly awaited newcomer is the Sheraton Laguna Resort, a beautiful five-star hotel on the Oka Point in Tamuning, overlooking the spectacular Philippine Sea. The Sheraton Laguna Resort will celebrate its Grand Opening in April 2007.

The opening of new hotels and improvements to existing attractions will give travel agents more opportunities to promote Guam to clients and the GVB believes recognizing the agents for their previous accomplishments is one small way to show its appreciation for a job well done. **(PR)**

LABOR FRONT

Federal Ombudsman consultations

By **FERDIE P. DE LA TORRE**
REPORTER

Q: Does the Federal Ombudsman's Office consult with the Philippine Consulate General?

A: Yes. The Federal Ombudsman consults with Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo and China Consul General Zhong Jianhua on various issues pertaining to the health and welfare of their foreign nationals working in the Commonwealth.

According to Federal Ombudsman James J. Benedetto in his 2006 report, his office also works cooperatively with the Chinese Economic Development Association, a quasi-governmental organization, to improve the delivery of services to Chinese nationals working in the NMI.

Q: How helpful is the Federal Ombudsman's Office to alien workers who have complaints?

A: As of last year, the Ombudsman's Office has assisted over 5,000 alien workers since its inception in 1999. The Ombudsman's Office reported that the cases include abandonment by the employer, non-payment of wages, barracks lockdowns, illegal deductions from paychecks, national origin discrimination, sex discrimination, and other matters.

Q: How can the Federal Ombudsman's Office help workers in filing complaints before federal agencies?

A: The Ombudsman refers a significant number of cases to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage & Hour Division. Referrals are also made to the Federal Bureau of Investigation on a regular basis. Benedetto said referred cases have been accepted for criminal prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Federal District Court.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune's* office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.

SENATORIAL CANDIDATES

The following is the list of registered candidates at the Philippines' Commission on Elections:

TEAM UNITY

Angara, Edgardo (Ed)
Arroyo, Joker (Joker)
Defensor, Michael (Tol)
Kiram III, Jamalul (Kiram)
Magsaysay, Vicente (Vic)
Montano, Cesar (Buboy)
Oreta, Teresa (Tessie)
Pichay, Prospero Jr. (Butch)
Recto, Ralph (Korecto)
Singson, Luis (Chavit)
Sotto, Vicente III (Tito)
Zubiri, Juan Miguel (Migz)

Osmena, John Henry (Sonny)
Pimentel, Aquilino III (Koko)
Roco, Sonia (Inang Guro)
Trillanes, Antonio IV (Magdalo)
Villar, Manuel Jr. (Manny)

INDEPENDENT

Gomez, Richard (Goma)
Honasan, Gregorio (Gringo)
Pangilinan, Francis (Kiko)

KAPATIRAN

Bautista Martin (Dr. B)
Paredes, Zosimo Jesus II (Jess)
Sison, Adrian (Dado)

KBL

Wood, Victor (Vic)

Philippine Green Republican Party
Canatal, Felix (Peck)

GENUINE OPPOSITION

Aquino, Benigno Simeon III (Noyonoy)
Cayetano, Allan Peter (Compañero)
Coseteng, Anna Dominique (Nikki)
Escudero, Francis Joseph (Chiz)
Lacson, Panfilo (Ping)
Legarda, Loren (Loren)

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Japan	83 min.		167 min.		200 min.	
Korea	100 min.		200 min.		224 min.	
Hong Kong	125 min.		250 min.		241 min.	

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Fugitive lawmaker 'testifies'—through YouTube

By **CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA**
INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—How does a “fugitive” lawmaker “participate” in a congressional inquiry thousands of miles away?

With an arrest warrant hanging over his head, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo did it in style—through a YouTube broadcast.

The 67-year-old party-list lawmaker, wanted for his alleged involvement in the so-called communist purges in the 1980s, used the popular video-sharing website to reach the US Senate foreign relations subcommittee on Asia, which is looking into the political killings in the Philippines.

Dressed in a white barong Tagalog, he spoke in an 18-minute video that provided an overview of the killings of political activists and journalists and assailed the Arroyo administration for its alleged repressive actions against progressive political parties like Bayan Muna.

“I call on our friends in different countries who have expressed their alarm over the extrajudicial killings to exert more pressure, possibly present more fact-finding missions, [because] the killings are continuing,” Ocampo said in a second video that ran for six minutes and 41 seconds.

He urged sympathizers to “put pressure, through your government, on the Philippine government to make the final decisive action” to end the killings.

The videos were taken between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday somewhere in Metro Manila “using an N80 mobile phone lent to Bayan Muna by an administration ally,” said Tonyo Cruz, media officer of the party-list group.

The background was bare, showing only a campaign sticker of the party-list group.

A statement released by Bayan Muna said the posting of Ocampo’s videos was in fulfillment of his promise to participate in the US congressional inquiry. But Cruz said it was not certain if the video was played during the hearings in Washington.

Not in isolation

In his video message, Ocampo said the government was trying to “throw me in prison” and to disqualify Bayan Muna and other party-list groups, Anakpawis and Gabriela, from the May elections.

“[These efforts] cannot be treated in isolation from the general trend of political repression and the state of extrajudicial killings,” he said.

He described as “a big hoax” the administration’s condemnation of the political killings, saying:

“The security forces have been given a go-signal to go on with their chosen means of achieving their objectives by targeting both the armed revolutionary forces and the unarmed activists of progressive political parties and people’s organizations.”

Outsiders to probe cases vs left-wing lawmakers

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—An international group of parliamentarians plans to investigate the alleged persecution of left-wing lawmakers in the Philippines, a congressman said Wednesday.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, or IPU, will send two members of its human rights committee—Sen. Sharon Carstairs of Canada and Sen. Rosario Macias Green of Mexico—to look into rebellion charges against detained Rep. Crispin Beltran and the multiple murder case against Rep. Satur Ocampo, both members of the left-wing Bayan Muna party, said fellow party member Rep. Teddy Casino.

The May visit shows that the international community, including foreign parliamentarians and human rights organizations, has become “very concerned about the ongoing political persecution and political killings in the Philippines,” Casino said.

The visit follows a 10-day investigation last month by the U.N. special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings that found soldiers were involved in attacks on left-wing activists and Bayan Muna party members.



FIRE VICTIMS

Fire victims save items from their gutted homes at the poor neighborhood of Malibay district at suburban Pasay city, south of Manila, Philippines, Thursday, March 15, 2007, following a fire that razed hundreds of houses and displaced more than 1,000 families. Arson officials are investigating what caused the fire, which ironically occurred as the country observes “Fire Prevention Month” in March.

Gunmen kill candidate, driver in south RP

KORONADAL, Philippines (AP)—Motorcycle-riding gunmen killed a prospective candidate in the May 14 local elections in an attack Thursday that also killed her driver and wounded her husband and another relative, police said.

Baikho Salendab, who belonged to a local party allied

with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s camp, was on her way to a political meeting when her van was fired upon by one of two men armed with an M16 rifle in southern Sultan Kudarat province, police Superintendent Teng Tucao said.

Salendab’s driver was killed instantly during the attack,

which wounded her husband and another relative traveling with her to nearby Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao province. Police were trying to track down the attackers, he said.

Salendab was running for office in Paglat town in predominantly Muslim Maguindanao, a province with a history of elec-

RP confident of US aid despite political killings

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government expressed confidence Thursday that it will continue to receive U.S. military aid despite a rash of political killings.

Ignacio Bunye, spokesman for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, made the remarks after a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Asia subcommittee began a hearing Wednesday on the extrajudicial slayings.

At the Washington hearing, Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer asked whether the United States should link military aid to the improvement of human rights in the Philippines, saying it was “really important that we do not have blood on our hands in this country.”

Eric John, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia, responded that the Bush administration believes such a link would be counterproductive to U.S. attempts to influence change in the Philippines.

John praised Arroyo for making efforts to stop the killings, but said, “As the ultimate authority in the chain of command, she has to take the steps to solve any involvement by members of the security forces.”

Bunye also shrugged off any linkage between aid and human rights, saying, “I think our security arrangements are much stronger than that and this assistance will be granted on the basis of actual needs of Philippine troops.”

He said the Arroyo government “is prepared to do whatever is necessary so that we finally put a stop to all of these atrocities.”

In a statement, Willy Gaa, Manila’s envoy to Washington, said U.S. military assistance has been “vital” to successes by the Philippine armed forces in fighting the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group and the communist New People’s Army, both on the U.S. list of terror groups.

The Filipino human rights group Karapatan, represented at the U.S. Senate hearing by its general secretary Marie Enriquez-Hilao, has reported that more than 800 people have been killed and about 200 others have disappeared since Arroyo took office in 2001.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

Toyota to invest \$116M in new facility

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Toyota Autoparts Philippines Inc. broke ground Thursday on a new US\$116 million (€88 million) facility for production and export of transmission parts to seven countries. The facility will produce R-type transmission units, used for larger vehicles. It will increase Toyota Autoparts’ capacity to produce manual transmission to 333,000 units from 150,000 it currently makes. “This will be only the fourth R-type transmission facil-

ity in the world for Toyota,” Toyota Motor Corp. senior managing director Akira Okabe said in opening ceremonies attended by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The other facilities are in Japan, Indonesia and Thailand. “This R-type transmission is scheduled to be exported to seven countries, not only in Asia, but as far as South Africa and Argentina,” said Toyota Autoparts President Yasuro Takeuchi. Toyota Autoparts Philippines, a majority-owned unit of Toyota Motors Corp., has invested 5.4 billion pesos (US\$112 million;

€85 million) in its existing facility in the Philippines since 1990, which has produced 2.4 million G-type transmission parts and 1.4 million constant velocity joints.

\$11M World Bank loan to improve RP tax collection

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The World Bank has approved a US\$11 million (€8.3 million) loan to help the Philippines plug the leaks in its tax collection system—a key measure for sustaining fiscal reform,

officials said Thursday. Revenue administration and culture of paying taxes is considered weak, the World Bank said. Government data show a disproportionate collection of income tax between employed and self-employed individuals. The National Tax Research Center estimates that almost 30 billion pesos (US\$625 million; €473 million) from the self-employed go uncollected every year. “The improvement in tax administration will help the government generate additional revenues that are needed to increase spending in so-

cial services, such as health and education, and vital infrastructure, such as roads and bridges,” Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said. World Bank representative Joachim von Amsberg said fiscal reforms—particularly the 2005 implementation of the expanded value-added tax—are essential for restoring the health of public finances. The reforms have allowed the Philippines to reduce debt and inflation. The peso has risen to a six-year high against the U.S. dollar, and the market recently hit the highest level in 10 years.

PINOYSTYLE

Marvin denies part in Angel-Oyo breakup

By **DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL**
INQUIRER

Even if Marvin Agustin is loveless at the moment, love is still in everything he does. He's an all-heart guy whether he's doting on his twins, supervising his resto staff or portraying a role.

That heart is now under renovation. So there's no truth to talk pinpointing him as the cause of the Angel Locsin and

Oyo Boy Sotto split-up.

He sighs. "Dyahe naman kay Gel. We're both recovering pa from a breakup. Our hearts both still need to heal."

Or is he just wary of falling for a younger woman again like his ex, Pauleen Luna? "I don't have a certain age preference naman. Love just hits me."

Marvin is off to Bangkok with Angel and Binoo to shoot for their top-rating "Asian Treasures." But his real treasures are his two sons. "Ang itim naming tatlo 'cause we swim a lot. When I'm free, I pick them up from their mom's place. We have a cool arrangement. Katuwa! They hug the



Angel Locsin

TV when they see me onscreen."

Marvs has really embraced fatherhood. It's his reward for living well and loving true.

Cager danger

Rufa Mae Quinto is pissed that her ex-boyfriend, cager Rudy Hatfield, keeps dragging her name into his interviews.

"I hope he and his fiancée will leave me in peace. They have apologized but I really got bothered when he e-mailed me, saying he will expose everything about our past on TV. Out of respect for the six years we were together, I hope he shuts up. I was devastated when we broke up. Di naman ako nagpapaawa. Nasaktan talaga ako to the point na na-ospital pa nga ako!" But I'm thankful

"But I'm thankful he left me 'cause when I was still with him, sa kanya lang umikot mundo ko. Now with Erik (Santos), I can grow. Erik is such a kind soul. With him, I can do things I never thought I could do before."

Ms Bombshell is not just moving on. She's moving up!

Swellhead?

Could it be true that Seiko Films' first choice for the lead role in "Silip" was Alfred Vargas but they tapped

Polo Ravales instead 'cause Alfred had become swellheaded and refused to renew his contract? I texted Alfred to clarify the issue but he hasn't replied.

I've known him since his Ateneo days. Fame hasn't changed him a bit. Maybe he just has other priorities now. His home studio paved the way for him, but there comes a time in every actor's career when he must shift directions in order to stay in the race.

Asia's Nightingale

Manila has missed Asia's Nightingale Lani Misalucha. She's now based in Vegas where she wows audiences at the Flamingo night after night. Catch her in "Missing You" on March 17 at the Big Dome. Joining her are Frenchie Dy, Mau Marcelo and Gary Valenciano. For tickets, call 9115555.

Unlike most divas, Lani does not need to get all flashy to be classy. She's a chanteuse nonpareil.

Lani says, "I see no reason why other singers should be insecure about me. How strange the rumors that Regine and I have a gap. I'm inviting her to watch my concert."

For the first time, Lani will really groove. "Kakaiba ang mga sayaw ko sa concert! May Britney number ako! I will also do a 'Dreamgirls,' [Barbra] Streisand medley."

She was thrilled to meet one of her idols, Gladys Knight. "I was speechless when she went backstage after watching my show."

As our "Nightingale" soars high in foreign shores, it's good to know she hasn't lost sight of her nest, where she is irreplaceable.

Top model

Solar Entertainment and RPN 9 present "Philippines' Next Top Model," a reality TV series every Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. Hosted by the ravishing Rufa Gutierrez-Bektas, the show features challenges that the candidates will hurdle, from daily

chores to rigorous training from actual footage shot 24/7.

The winner gets a contract with Starz modeling agency in Hong Kong, P500,000 in cash, and a south sea pearl necklace—among other fab prizes. Strike a pose and strike gold!

'Love Spell'

Love shines on the dance floor this March in "Love Spell's" "Shoes Ko Po, Shoes Ko Day!" (every Sunday after "Your Song"). It features the Ultimate Dance 4 lovebirds Shaina Magdayao, Rayver Cruz, Maja Salvador and John Prats.

In this love story with a magical twist, what will happen when the two dancing belles turn into ugly ducklings in the middle of their dates?

Are good looks really important in choosing a partner? John says, "Of course it all starts with physical attraction. But that should not be the sole basis of a relationship. Beauty fades. It's character that stays."

Oh yeah! We can't change people we love. We can only unmask them.

Piolo and Sam

Some things are worth repeating. Like the sold-out "Heartthrobs" concert of Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby.

Piolo is overwhelmed that he has conquered the concert stage as well. "Acting is my first love. Singing is a bonus from

God. I still can't believe I have records," he exclaims.

If PJ had to choose, what would he give up? "If I could have it my way, I wouldn't want to give up [either]. Acting gives me a chance to experiment portraying different characters. Singing takes me to places where I can reach out to more kababayans."

His "national anthem" is U2's "All I Want is You." And that's exactly what Sam and Piolo's diehard fans are chanting. Even if they're singing for the nth time, these two "Papas ng Bayan" never sound like a broken record.



Lani Misalucha



Rufa Mae Quinto

Dollhouse for a singing champ

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
INQUIRER

Singing champ Sheryn Regis lives in a star-studded community—actually, a condominium building just a stone's throw away from ABS-CBN, her home network.

Right next door lives Piolo Pascual. Down the hallway is Redford White's unit. On another floor, Andrew Wolff and Judy Ann Santos.

In spite of its proximity to the studio and, therefore, work, Sheryn's unit is "home sweet home." The Cebuana singer's wish is for it to stay "relaxing, just like our home in the province, which I miss very much." Her loved ones—m

Her loved ones—musical director-husband Earl and four-year-old daughter Sweetie—have moved to the city to keep her company.

Sheryn is also kept smiling by her extensive collection of dolls. "I have 170 Barbie dolls so far," she says.

Her favorites are the Dolls of the World series (South Africa, Greece, Russia) and the "Lord of the Rings/Galadriel" edition bought during a shopping spree at the Mattel store in Los Angeles.

Some are gifts from friends. Fellow champ Christian Bautista gave her an "American Idol" Barbie. Not to be outdone, "Star in a Million" batchmate Erik Santos gifted her with a California Barbie.

Sheryn also has a closet full of Disney Princess collectibles, of which the most cherished is Little Mermaid. After all, she recorded the theme song of "Marina," a local mermaid fantasy.

The petite singer admits that her fondness for dolls can be traced to her childhood. "Times were hard and we

couldn't afford dolls," she recounts. Ever creative, the young Sheryn fashioned homemade dolls from empty bottles. "I'd paint faces on the bottles with my mom's nail polish (mom was a manicurist.) Sometimes I'd also put a veil on the doll's head."

Later, Sheryn taught herself how to paint (in watercolor) and sketch (charcoal).

Some of the pieces are displayed at home. She has given fellow singing champ Rachel Ann Go a charcoal portrait as birthday gift.

"The colors in my paintings reflect my mood at the time I make them. It's therapeutic," she explains.

When she's not doing gigs, hosting "ASAP '07" or doing promo work for her latest CD "The Modern Jukebox Collection," she'd rather stay holed up in her condo. She paints, surfs the Net, vocalizes on the



AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

All of 170 Barbies and counting. "I buy dolls in each country I visit: Singapore, US, Dubai, Qatar, Russia. All the countries have representatives."

Magic Sing, has fun on the Playstation Portable and plays with Sweetie. "I'm a homebody," she says.

Sweetie isn't into Barbie, though. "My daughter prefers Bratz and Dora."

Heart: I was a Jessica Simpson in the making

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
INQUIRER

Says Heart Evangelista of the different projects lined up for her by ABS-CBN: "It's a Christmas-birthday-Valentine gift rolled into one."

That's probably because she is celebrating her birthday today.

Accompanied by her Genesis managers Angeli Pangilinan and Gina Martinez, she met with ABS-CBN executives Cory Vidanes and Malou Santos last week.

Genesis told Inquirer Entertainment that Heart is working on a sineserye (a soap opera based on a movie) this month and a variety show in April, and movies with Star Cinema.

Alma mater

According to the grapevine, she is headlining a remake of the 1992 Viva movie "Hiram na Mukha," which starred Na-

nette Medved as a deformed woman who became beautiful with the help of an insane plastic surgeon.

"It's challenging, heavy drama," she says.

It's a comeback of sorts for Heart, who's been shrugging off rumors that she's leaving the Kapamilya for the Kapuso network. (Actually, she hosted ABC 5's "I Love Philippine Idol" while she was away from ABS-CBN.)

"I'm happy to be back home. This was my school, my alma mater. This was where I grew up. If I had a choice, I'd rather stay," she says.

She admits that the "break" did her a world of good. "I've realized a lot of things. Everything was happening at the same time," she recounts, referring to the slew of intrigues that she had to overcome.

"I didn't appreciate my blessings. While I was away, I had the chance to reflect. I've become less 'show biz.' I'm more grounded now. I've aged 10 years in that two-year span," she explains.

Very sheltered

She admits that she was a "20-year-old with the mind of a 16-year-old" then.

"I was a Jessica Simpson in the mak-

ing," she notes. "I didn't know how to cross the street. I thought you pay your Meralco bill at the Meralco Theater! I was very sheltered."

In the "growing-up" department, boyfriend Jericho Rosales was a big help.

"He's a good influence on me; he's very independent," Heart says of Echo.

She also shares with Echo a love for music.

Speaking of "independent" projects, Heart is producing her own CD, which will be released locally and in Australia. "My single 'Tell Me' reached no. 18 in Australia's Top 50 charts," she says.

Along with Maria Isabel Lopez, Jao Mapa and John Arcilla, she topbills the indie film "Ay Ayeng," directed by Ed Palmos. "It will be screened in Hawaii and Berlin."

She plays Ayeng, an Ifugao school teacher struggling against militarization during the Marcos era.



Heart Evangelista

A more candid and funny Hugh Grant

By **RUBEN V. NEPALES**
INQUIRER

LOS ANGELES—"I told Drew (Barrymore) as I took my shirt off, 'Here come those tired old tits again.'"

This was one of the amusing statements in a recent press con of Hugh Grant, who was a lot more relaxed, candid and funny than the last time we interviewed him. He seemed to be chafing from being misinterpreted then, so he was very guarded this time.

Speaking for his romantic-comedy with Drew Barrymore, "Music and Lyrics," Hugh made for an entertaining interviewee with his self-deprecating humor. It's the British wit and eloquence that was in grand display during the last awards season, especially during the Golden Globe Awards, when Hugh's compatriots, Helen Mirren, Sacha Baron Cohen and Hugh Laurie, were impressive in their acceptance speeches.

The press con in New York for "Music and Lyrics," where Hugh, playing an '80s pop star has-been, dared to sing, dance and even play the piano, took place before his ex, Elizabeth Hurley, married businessman Arun Nayar in India. Shortly after the interview, Hugh broke off with his girlfriend, socialite Jemima Khan.

You were quite brave to show your chest in one scene with Drew.

They lit me very carefully for that scene (laughter). I wore an immense amount of body tan. I remember panicking a couple of weeks before that scene came up. I did an awful lot of Pilates in my room. I was not happy at the prospect of it. I told Drew as I took my shirt off, "Here come those tired old tits again (laughter)." They have been out before and really, at 46, I should



Hugh Grant was a lot more relaxed, candid and funny this time than the last time we interviewed him.

just keep them to myself.

Your character is a has-been '80s pop star. Are you afraid of being called a has-been someday?

I don't think I'd mind. I am quite looking forward to being a has-been. As my character says at the beginning of the film, "I'm a happy has-been." I think I myself would be.

Is the term "has-been" also used in England?

Maybe it's used more here, like the word "loser," an insult in America. But it doesn't really exist in England. People quite like losing in England. Everyone supports the underdog. Whereas here, if you lose, you're a nobody.

Personally, what do you think of the term?

I don't think a human being should be judged by his success, particularly the present success. The fact that people achieved anything should be good, and folks should give them a certain amount of respect for that.

The people you might classify as has-beens, whom I've met... I sometimes bump into Simon

Le Bon at parties. He still does his thing and does it quite successfully but he's clearly not the star he was in the '80s. But the big thing is, he's got such a big sense of humor about it. When he gives his concerts now, he gets a bit tired. Sometimes he has to sit down to deliver a song and I think that's growing old gracefully.

Did you go to a lot of dance clubs in the '80s?

I suppose I must have done some dancing. Amyl Nitrate, I remember that. Everyone was taking Amyl Nitrate for a brief phase in London in the mid-'80s.

What were you doing in the '80s?

In the '80s, I remember being quite happy. I didn't really get miserable until about 1991 (laughter). I quite liked being young and acting was quite fun in those days because they were pretty crappy jobs. But I was thinking, well, it doesn't matter. I am not doing this for very long and it's fun. I am earning lots of money and there are pretty girls. It's not going to last forever. I went to foreign locations. I did not have a lot of money growing up so even going on airplanes and staying in hotels seemed like a thrill.

I certainly didn't take the job very seriously so it was all just for me. It was just raw material for stories to amuse my friends with. I remember thinking I was quite enjoying life. I was also doing that comedy show I did with two friends called "The Jockeys of Norfolk." That was incredibly satisfying because we wrote and performed it and it was a success onstage. When we did it for television, it was an abject failure.

So what happened in the '90s?

Age, pressure, success definitely. I don't like pressure. It was very nice to have that success with "Four Weddings and a Funeral" but the pressure then to be paid tons of money and to have a great big Hollywood film open on my back is a lot to deal with.

I know that sounds like ridiculous moaning if I'm being paid all that much money and I suppose it is ridiculous. But it's pressure and I like a very easy life. I am really only happy on holiday. I like no pressure except to think, "Shall we go to this beach or that beach?"

You describe yourself as miserable, grumpy.

Oh look, I am not that miserable (laughter). I'm a little bit intense and anxious on a film set because I am so nervous of it going wrong. I think comedy is so delicate. It's either funny or it's not funny. Very often, it's just incredibly precise, particularly something like what Marc writes.

There are zinger one-liners and there is a way to time them. If it's not funny, it's humiliating on a worldwide scale plus. I've said this many times, the mechanics of filmmaking are very old-fashioned. Nothing has really changed since the '20s and it's really slow. I do two minutes of the film a day from a thousand different angles, a thousand different takes and it's mind-numbingly boring. So it's a combination of terrifying and boring and that does make me a bit intense on a film set.

You are always paired with someone who's like a ray of sunshine—Drew, Renee Zellweger, Sandra Bullock—to lift your spirits.

(Laughter) Well, I think, yeah, I don't think I could ever be closely associated with someone who was a "miserablist" like me (laughter). No.

You sang, danced and played the piano in this film for the first time. Were you afraid that you would make a complete fool of yourself?

I was terrified. I can't think what got into me. I was just worn down in the end by Marc Lawrence. He kept bullying me for years about this project and I kept saying, "Look, forget it. I don't like music. I am not interested. The whole thing about a songwriting couple is boring."

Then we were chatting about it one day and the idea of the lead character being an '80s has-been seemed very funny. I may have been drunk. I said, "Yeah, let's go for it." And then I remember telling some friends about it. They all said, "You're completely insane. Of all the people in the world who would try to play a pop star, you would be the worst."

So it was very scary and yet strange because I am a very timid actor. I don't take any risks. It was the music part that I actually ended up enjoying the most in the film. I think we all need new stimuli.

OPINYON

The 'unstated' in PERC's findings

The Philippines moved again into the center of international spotlight with the publication on Wednesday of the survey conducted by the Hong Kong-based, Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC). The survey found the Philippines as the most corrupt economy among 13 countries across Asia.

For the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which is facing a crucial midterm election, there could not have been a worse time for the release of the survey. And it came as the US House of Representatives and Senate started hearings on the rising wave of murders of several hundreds of leftist political activists. The hearings in the US Congress added pressure on the administration to stop the killings, which have been condemned earlier by the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights and by the European Union.

These interventions have not only internationalized the issue of extrajudicial killings; they have also raised the murders as a major issue in the coming Philippine elections. Which is what makes them damaging to the government.

PERC's survey shows that the Philippines has surpassed Indonesia, graded the most corrupt Asian country in 2006. With a sample of 1,476 expatriate businessmen in the region, more than 100 of whom are based in the Philippines, the survey found that in a grading scale with zero as the best possible score and 10 the worst, the country scored 9.40 points. Last year, the Philippines'

grade was 7.80.

The Philippines elbowed out Indonesia, which, with a grade of 8.02, shared with Thailand the distinction of being the second most corrupt nations in the region.

Among the 13 economies, Malaysia stood in the middle. According to the survey, China was the seventh most corrupt nation; Vietnam and India, the ninth; and Vietnam, the 10th. Singapore beat Hong Kong as the cleanest economy.

The January-February survey findings rattled the government, sending it into a flurry of explanations, dismissing them as old hat and based on perceptions that did not take into account Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez's record. Gutierrez claims that the conviction rate in corruption cases involving government officials rose to 77 percent during January-March this year, up from 40 percent last year and 33 percent in 2005.

The Ombudsman says the list of convictions includes four municipal mayors, a metropolitan trial judge and a president of a state university. But none of them is a big fish. In environmentalist circles, it is known that fishermen throw the small fry they catch back to the sea.

PERC did not pretend to do anything more than polling resident businessmen on their perception of corrupt practices. The Philippines-based businessmen were not talking when they were asked about the Ombudsman's claims, their own day-to-day business dealings with the government, the kickbacks they have to pay to get contracts approved

and their experiences through the bureaucratic mill and with the powerbrokers facilitating the transactions in the back rooms. The businessmen and government officials, including the Ombudsman, did not speak the same language about corruption.

The survey asked expat businessmen about the effectiveness of the judiciary in fighting corruption and the average citizen's tolerant attitude toward corruption as part of the business environment in which they are operating. Their feedback: "[I]t is bad and has been bad all along. People are just growing tired of the action and insincerity of leading officials when they promise to fight corruption."

In an interview with the Inquirer, PERC's managing director Robert Broadfoot said the respondents cited the unresolved plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada. He said the case "has been dragging for years." He added, "then there's the opposition's charges (on corruption and electoral fraud) against President Arroyo."

The businessmen did not cite specific cases of corruption that victimized them. But the judicial environment in which corruption cases are dragging forms part of the perception. The expats are not in the business of blowing the whistle. It would be making them vulnerable to retaliation and harassment from the government. This is why they are talking about the judicial environment.



Analysis

By **AMANDO DORONILA**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

But Estrada's case is not exactly "old news," as some local Filipino businessmen would like to look at it dismissively. His case is a prime example of "undelivered" results.

An official of the Bankers Association of the Philippines commented that foreign businessmen might have made conclusions based on certain

high-profile cases. "Corruption is endemic all around Asia," the official said. "It's just that there have been cases here in the limelight, like the Piatco case," referring to the unresolved controversy over Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The Supreme Court and the Senate "blue ribbon" committee on investigation have found the Piatco contract to be a corrupt transaction, and the contract has gone into international arbitration, indicating the government's incapacity to carry out the prosecution of corruption.

Even though these cases are long pending, they nevertheless form part of the perception. Perceptions are dangerous because they are important in making investment decisions, more than official statistics showing an increase in the number of convictions in corruption cases. Even though businessmen are not disclosing specific corrupt practices directly affecting them, it is the "unstated" that determines the damning perceptions in the surveys.

EDITORIAL

Bad karma

The Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration's initial reaction to the latest corruption survey conducted among foreign businessmen in Asia by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, which found that the Philippines is now perceived as the most corrupt in the region, was classic denial.

To be sure, the limits of the latest PERC survey must be acknowledged. First, it includes only 13 countries in Asia. Second, a country's rating is based on the perceptions of foreign businessmen doing business in that country; in the case of the Philippines, "more than 100" expatriate businessmen were polled. Third, PERC itself noted that there was no worsening of corruption in the Philippines: "It is bad and has been bad all along. People are just growing tired of the inaction and insincerity of leading officials when they promise to fight corruption."

Given these limits, however, there is no disputing the PERC survey's conclusion: The Philippines was the country with "the distinction of being perceived in the worst light this year."

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 as the worst possible score, the Philippines received a grade of 9.40. This was a dramatic drop in perception from last year's grade of 7.80.

What explains the deterioration? Noting that corruption in the private sector in the Philippines was only at 4.15 ("which is quite good"), PERC suggested that the decline could be traced to the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada, which has dragged on for years, and to the "opposition's charges" against

President Arroyo.

But we note that the businessmen-respondents in each country were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their host-country's judiciary and the legal system in the war on corruption. It is for this reason that we see the 2007 PERC corruption survey as an indictment of the administration of justice in the Arroyo era.

In the last two years, the President and her allies have repeatedly mugged Lady Justice; now some of the witnesses are talking out loud about the thuggery they have seen.

The fall from a mediocre grade of 7.80 to a dismal grade of 9.40 must have been caused in part by the abysmal performance of Raul Gonzalez as justice secretary. Gonzalez will be remembered as one of the worst administrators of justice in our history; his injudicious remarks, his appalling partisanship even in legal matters, his well-proven inability to be just, not only leave a sorry legacy for his children; they undermine public confidence in the rule of law.

The fall must also have been caused in part by a pliable Ombudsman, Merceditas Gutierrez, who insulted the Supreme Court and the noble profession of the law by, first, dilly-dallying on the anomalous Mega Pacific contract approved by the Commission on Elections; then rushing to beat the high court's deadline by submitting a partial resolution that found one commissioner partially guilty; then finally conducting hearings of her own (after the deadline had passed); and finally issuing a resolution (based on old evidence already found wanting) that found everyone innocent. The perfect crime.

In the Arroyo era, justice has been delayed, selective, punitive for oppositionists, generous for the truly big fish. No wonder businessmen see corruption as a booming business.

The human side of war

Shortly after the outbreak of the Philippine-American War, on or around Feb. 10, 1899, an order was drafted for Emilio Aguinaldo's signature containing 10 instructions for commanders and soldiers. Normally, such documents containing stale or obsolete information are consigned to the trashcan, or if one wants to be ecological about it, converted into paper bags for use in the market as "pambalot ng tuyo" [fish wrap]. For the historian, however, these century-old orders and circulars reflect the conditions of the time and, in this case, provide a rare glimpse into how the Philippine-American War was fought.

What caught my attention as I was browsing randomly through J.R.M. Taylor's five-volume compilation of documents, "The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States," were two detailed parts of the circular that had something to do with arms and ammunition. One provision recommended that: "All commanders shall carefully look after the soldiers of their commands at meals, and shall always enjoin them not to fire without first calculating the distance of the enemy" (to ensure that they will fire sure shots).

What does the above mean? That our soldiers just discharged their weapons to make noise? We are told that on the evening of Feb. 4, 1899, when the Philippine-American War began, all the generals were in Malolos attending a ball. What happened was that one shot led to another and there was a whole night of shooting. Yet, when dawn broke, the casualties on either side did not seem to correspond to the ammunition expended.

"Ano'ng nangyari?" [What happened?] Someone should tell us what really happened that night, but if we need any clues, this draft circular provides food for thought as it maintains that first shots fired are not warning shots, but shots made to see how far the enemy is:

"The first shots are sufficient to ascertain the range. I know that there are some still ordering or following the Spanish system, that is, firing often without causing damage to the enemy, and others who throw down ammunition to finish it soon and lead one to believe that they have done much firing, or to withdraw soon so that his comrades will not consider him a coward. These acts are a dishonor to the true defenders of Mother Philippines. While those men act very brave in time of peace with their Filipino brothers and the people of the town, the real revolutionaries, defenders of the fatherland, are those who see themselves humiliated and cast down because they now have their eyes opened and know what is true. They do not know how to offend their Filipino brothers and companions; they are not laboring for their own good, but for the tranquility of all the Philippines. Although they have much instruction, my poor brothers place no value on life, and when the country is in danger, they spontaneously present themselves and demand

arms and bolos with which to defend it."

One reason the circular was never circulated was its very preachy tone. I wonder who drafted this and what was the context? The thought that our soldiers would actually throw away precious ammunition as an excuse to leave the battlefield is something that goes against everything we have been taught about the Revolution and the Philippine-American War. Why do we presume that everyone who fought then were heroes? People fought for various reasons, but did they all think of the nation? Furthermore, textbook history makes us often forget that our heroes were not bullet-proof, that they had little or no military training, that they had wives and children they wanted to return to, that they had other lives. Shouldn't we try and see the human side of the war?

There is a part of the circular that encourages a notion of fraternity among the troops. It made me wonder though if this isn't a given when you are fighting for your country. But then when you think of a variety of soldiers from different ethno-linguistic and cultural groups still trying to imagine a nation rather than regions, we can see that it is one thing to declare independence from Spain on June 12, 1898 in Kawit town, outside Manila, and quite another matter to know what to do with that independence, how to nurture that independence and make a nation, not just a state. What struck me in this document was the idea of using knives:

"Every commander must give full liberty of action to his soldiers in battle in order that they may at once seize the most advantageous points for attacking the enemy and for preparing thus to deliver an attack with knives; everyone must keep a [constant] lookout, must have a thorough understanding with his neighbors and cooperate with them most cordially; they must not be alarmed by rifle fire; they must remember that this is nothing."

Does the above text indicate that some soldiers ran away as soon as they smelled gunpowder? Did they run away at the first crack of rifle fire? How could this circular counter the fear of battle? How could it even claim that bullets coming your way "is nothing"?

Original documents in our National Library not only give us the story of the struggle for freedom, but the details that make us understand and appreciate the past better.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.



Looking Back

By **AMBETH OCAMPO**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SAMU'T SARI

ALAY LAKAD

The OWWA-OFW Support Group members on their Alay Lakad every Sunday 5:30am for the Tuloy Aral Project. The Alay Lakad is headed by OWWA-OFW Support Group leaders Jun Banadera, Lito Marquez, Jun Lapeceros, Fe Calixterio, Ric Talabucon, Mario Aquilo and OWWA Welfare officer Leonor Mabagal.



'TULOY ARAL' DONATION

CNMI POWER donates \$100 to OWWA's "Tuloy Aral Project." In this photo, CNMI POWER president Ladyvir Canape, together with other members of the group, presents the check to Leonor Mabagal of OWWA outside the OWWA/POLO Office at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe on March 4, 2007. This donation was made possible due to the group's fundraising effort last Christmas. CNMI POWER has another fundraising for Tuloy Aral Project. This is the Suds for Funds, which will be held on March 24 at the Shell Airport Road. "We are inviting the community to please support this fund-raising for a good cause," said Canape.



BIRTHDAY PARTY

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur and Liza Anda listen to the kids singing a birthday song for their one-year-old daughter, Areeza, during the party at KFC in Chalan Kanoa last Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur and Liza Anda, their daughter, Areeza, with the KFC mascot and clown during Areeza's first birthday party at KFC in Chalan Kanoa last Saturday.

